



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY EXPANDS NON-ESSENTIAL WATER USE RESTRICTIONS TO 17
WESTERN COUNTIES**

Asks Citizens Statewide To Voluntarily Conserve Water As Drought Worsens

RALEIGH - Gov. Mike Easley today expanded his water conservation directive to state agencies in 17 counties in western North Carolina that are in extreme or severe drought. He has directed that the agencies stop all non-essential water use. He has also asked other agencies, businesses and citizens across the state to voluntarily cut back their use by about 10 percent. He also repeated the importance of state and local governments continuing to conserve water because drought conditions are worsening and there is no certainty where or when the state will receive much-needed rainfall.

"I have expanded my direction to state agencies to an additional five of the hardest hit counties to stop using water for anything that is not related to public health and safety, as water supplies become limited in those counties," Easley said. "We are just starting the summer recreational season when demand for water increases for everything from home gardening to neighborhood pools. It is critical that all North Carolinians limit all non-essential uses of water and observe any water restrictions that are ordered by local authorities."

The lack of rainfall has had an impact on stream flow and ground water levels, making it critical that voluntary conservation measures start now in the event that the summer remains dry. Easley said it is likely that more counties will be added to the severe and extreme drought categories if there is no significant rainfall soon.

Easley has notified his cabinet secretaries to direct department employees in the five additional counties to stop washing vehicles, using water for ornamental purposes, watering grass and washing down surfaces such as sidewalks. The five new counties are: Avery, Burke, Henderson, McDowell and Rutherford. The 12 counties already under the restrictions are: Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey.

The governor has also sent a memo to members of the Council of State and to the heads of the state university and community college systems asking them to comply with the directive.

Easley recommends the following simple steps that all North Carolinians can use to conserve during this drought:

- Take shorter showers.
- Do not leave water running while rinsing dishes, shaving or brushing teeth.
- Limit car washing. Use a bucket and a hose with a spray attachment.